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ABSTRACT

This 3-part guide is intended to help local school personnel serve their gifted students through participation in the Duke University (North Carolina) Talent Identification Program (TIP). Part I lists a timetable of activities during fall and spring which focus on the TIP application process and achievement testing. Part II describes a variety of programming options being used in schools which participate in the TIP talent search. These include curricular options (e.g., honors classes, independent study, advanced placement courses, part-time college enrollment, grade acceleration) and extracurricular options such as school-sponsored academic competitions, summer programs, mentorships, and counseling services. A final section lists sources of information on educating academically talented students, including organizations, books, articles, and journals. (JW)

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A GUIDE TO THE TALENT SEARCH FOR LOCAL SCHOOL PERSONNEL

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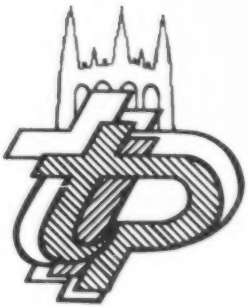

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this *Guide* is to help local school personnel make the most of their students' participation in Duke University's Talent Identification Program (TIP). Since the Program's inception, teachers, counselors, principals, and gifted/talented coordinators from many schools have shared with TIP staff members the various ways in which their schools have made the Talent Search an integral part of efforts to serve gifted students. Our hope is that this *Guide* will be an effective means of sharing their ideas with other educators committed to providing appropriate services for academically talented youngsters.

The *Guide* is divided into three parts. The first section offers suggestions for insuring that participation in the Talent Search is a positive experience for all those involved. The second discusses a variety of programming options for gifted secondary students and offers some suggestions for using SAT scores to decide which options are appropriate for your students. The final part lists sources of information on educating gifted students.

The Talent Identification Program has as a major goal helping schools meet the needs of bright students. We hope that school personnel will find this *Guide* useful and that they will feel free to consult the TIP staff whenever we can be of assistance.

I.
MAKING THE TALENT SEARCH A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Participation in the Talent Search is voluntary and is intended for bright students who want to learn more about their abilities and about the programs and services available to students like themselves. Although the decision about whether to participate is made by the student and his or her parents, there are several things school personnel can do to help insure that all who wish to be a part of the search are able to do so and that those who do participate learn from the experience. There are two periods during which teachers and counselors can be of great help to students and parents: in the fall when students are registering for the search and preparing for the SAT and in the spring when students receive their SAT scores. Below is a list of activities which many schools have found helpful to their students.

FALL

1. **Order applications early**. Talent Search materials and applications are available from the TIP office by September 1st each year. Early application requests from schools are important to insure that students have a choice between taking the SAT in December or in January. There are always some students who have other commitments on the January date, and in some parts of the country January weather makes travel to test sites more difficult and test center closings more likely. To allow students to register for the December SAT, applications should be ordered by October 1st.

2. **Inform students of their eligibility to participate in the Talent Search through a letter which contains their qualifying test scores and your school I.D. number**. Students need both these pieces of information to complete their Talent Search applications. Several schools have sent us the brief form letters they have composed for this purpose and we would be glad to share them. Be sure also that a Student Information form is given to each student with the application. Each year hundreds of applications must be sent back because test scores and other information are missing. In most cases these applications are returned to the TIP office in time for the student to participate, but some are so delayed that students must be excluded from the search.

3. **Hold an information session with students and/or parents to explain the Talent Search and application procedures**. Parents and students unfamiliar with the Talent Search concept and the SAT will appreciate your help in understanding Talent Search materials and completing applications. Several points deserve special emphasis:

   a. The goals of the Talent Search are to provide students with information about their abilities and to introduce them to a network of

services and programs available to academically talented students. In addition to SAT scores and interpretive materials, all Talent Search participants receive an *Educational Opportunity Guide* which lists state directors of gifted education, state associations for the gifted, academic competitions, and more than 150 programs for gifted students. Talent Search participants also receive a four-year subscription to TIP's newsletter.

b. Students must complete **two** applications and pay **two** fees. Registration with the Talent Identification Program does not register a student to take the SAT. Students will receive materials to register for the SAT **after** they have registered with TIP.

c. Both the Talent Search and SAT deadlines are important. TIP cannot accept Talent Search applications after the deadline. The Admissions Testing Program will accept late SAT applications, but there are higher fees for late registrants.

d. Fee allowances to cover the cost of Talent Search registration are available to students who qualify for the free or reduced price school lunch program. To obtain a fee allowance, a candidate should have a school official write a letter on school stationery verifying eligibility for the school lunch program and enclose this letter with the Talent Search application. Students eligible for the school lunch program but not actually participating are still eligible for fee allowances.

e. Students who want to use the SAT Question-and-Answer Service must register for the January testing. This service provides students with copies of the verbal and mathematical sections of the SAT, the correct answers, and their own answer sheet. The fee for this service is approximately $7.00. Additional information about the SAT Question-and-Answer Service may be found in the *Registration Bulletin*.

f. Remind students that although Talent Search participants take the SAT at the same time and in the same test centers as high school students, they are not competing with high school students. Some test centers set aside special rooms for Talent Search participants, but regardless of the physical arrangements, Talent Search participants should not feel they are being compared to high school students.

g. SAT scores earned as part of the Talent Search will not negatively influence college admissions decisions. If students take the SAT again in high school for admissions purposes, their Talent Search scores will not appear on their score report unless they have taken the SAT in every year since the Talent Search.

4. **Urge students to read Talent Search and SAT materials carefully and to take the practice test in the booklet "Taking the SAT."** It is not

necessary, or even desirable, to try to provide coaching for students taking the SAT as part of the Talent Search. It is important, however, for students to familiarize themselves with the format of the SAT and the kinds of questions it includes. If time allows, consider scheduling a session for students to take the practice test as a group. They will then have had an opportunity to take the test under conditions similar to the actual administration. The practice SAT is important not only to familiarize students with the test, but also to insure that they have realistic expectations about their probable performance.

5. **Consider publishing a news release announcing the names of all students eligible to participate in the Talent Search**. One goal of the Talent Search is to give public recognition to academically talented students. All students who qualify for this program meet this definition, and all deserve to be recognized. A news release in the fall emphasizes that it is an honor to be included in this group whatever one's SAT scores.

6. **Contact the Talent Identification Program early if problems arise**. If you do not have enough applications or if students do not receive SAT registration materials by the specified date, please contact the TIP office immediately.

SPRING

1. **Discuss SAT scores with students and/or parents**. Once you and your students have received their SAT scores and TIP's summary of the results of the Talent Search, offer to discuss scores with interested students and their parents. Although the results summary provides students with information which allows them to compare their scores with those of other Talent Search participants, some may need help in interpreting these data. For students who find themselves near the bottom of the group, it is important to remind them once again that all Talent Search participants are academically talented.

2. **Include participation in the Talent Search as a category in your school's spring honors assembly**. All participants should be honored, but if you wish to single out particularly high scorers, you should plan to schedule your assembly after the school reports are available (late April). TIP receives score reports from Admissions Testing Program *after* they are sent to students, and several weeks are required to compile reports for schools. Actual SAT scores should never be released to the press or the public without the permission of the student.

3. **Consider recording participation in the Talent Search on a student's transcript**. Actual scores need not be included, but participation is an honor which should be noted.

4. **Encourage students who score well and are invited to the state recognition ceremony to attend this event**.

II.
PROGRAMMING OPTIONS FOR TALENT SEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND OTHER ABLE STUDENTS

An important benefit of the Talent Search for participating schools is the additional information it provides them about the abilities of some of their brightest students. The SAT was chosen as an identifying test because it provides separate information abut verbal and mathematical abilities and because it is difficult enough to discriminate among the abilities of the brightest junior high school students. Although nearly all Talent Search students would be classified as academically gifted according to common protocols, the SAT differentiates among their degrees of giftedness. SAT scores can thus be helpful in individualizing students' programs.

The SAT can be especially useful in identifying academically talented students who are not working up to their potential. Many bright students who are not challenged in their early years become bored with school and do not put forth their best efforts. The SAT can identify those who are ready for advanced work and would probably benefit from the challenge.

The key to successful programming for gifted students, as for all students, is flexibility. Ideally, a student's program should be matched to his or her ability in all areas. A student who is prepared to advance in mathematics but not in language arts should find it easy to do so. Individualizing programs is of course more difficult than offering the same subjects to all students, but many schools have found ways to respond to the needs of their academically talented students without placing undue strains on their resources.

Listed below are some programming options being used successfully in schools which participate in the Talent Search. There is no single "right way" to educate gifted students. The right combination for a particular school depends on the needs of its students and its available resources.

CURRICULAR OPTIONS

1. **Honors or G/T Classes**. Many schools offer special sections of subject area classes for high ability students. Such classes generally move more rapidly and cover more material than sections designed for average students. Ideally such courses also call upon and develop students' higher level thinking skills by demanding analysis and evaluation rather than memorization of facts and formulas. Most students who qualify to participate in the Talent Search are capable of honors-level work in one or more subject areas.

2. **Starting a Course or Course Sequence Early**. Academically talented students are often ready to begin a course or course sequence earlier than

is customary. The experience of educational programs offered by the various regional talent searches suggests that students who score above 400 on the SAT-M are ready to begin algebra. A verbal score above 430 usually indicates that a student is ready to begin study of a foreign language. If such courses are not available at your school, you may wish to introduce them, either at the school or district level.

Another alternative, if only a few students are involved, is to arrange for students to take courses at the nearest high school. Such an arrangement involves some practical obstacles (e.g., scheduling and transportation), but many schools have overcome these difficulties in order to allow students to advance in some subjects while remaining with their age-mates in others.

3. **Compacting Portions of the Curriculum**. Highly talented students are able not only to begin courses early but also to accelerate the pace at which course work is completed. Such students can learn all the material covered in an average course, with the same depth of understanding, in a much shorter time. Students with SAT-M $\geq$ 500 complete Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II in one semester in TIP's By-Mail Program or in three weeks during intensive summer residential programs. Students with SATV $\geq$ 430 have completed the equivalent of a year of high school language study during this three-week period. Many school districts have adopted talent search models and offer fast-paced courses for their academically talented students. If your school or district decides to establish such courses, it is important that credit granted be based on the material mastered, not on the time spent in class. A student who completes two years of mathematics or two years of French during one school year should be granted two course credits.

4. **Independent Study**. If your school or district has only a few students with SAT-Math scores over 500 or SAT-Verbal scores over 430, you may wish to arrange independent study for these students in their areas of strength. TIP's experience suggests that self-paced instruction—a student working without guidance and setting his own speed—is usually ineffective. Independent study works best when a teacher sets the pace based on an evaluation of the student's ability. This is the method used by mentor's in TIP's By-Mail Program. Many schools have found TIP's By-Mail course materials, which are available for a nominal fee, useful in setting up independent study programs for their students.

5. **Advanced Placement Courses**. Thousands of high schools participate in the College Entrance Examination Board's Advanced Placement Program (APP). APP courses are usually fast-paced, difficult, and reserved for top high school juniors and seniors. After a year of college-level work, students take an APP examination in May. Those who score high enough may be granted up to a year of college credit in the APP subject when they enroll in college.

Although APP courses are usually limited to high school students, exceptionally talented younger students have been quite successful in

these courses and on the APP examinations. In fact, in 1984 the mean score for ninth graders taking APP examinations was 3.63 (out of 5) as compared with a mean of 3.12 for all candidates. The 1981-85 mean for students in TIP's By-Mail Program (whose average age was 15 years) was 4.10. Students with SAT-M $\geq$ 550 or SAT-V $\geq$ 500 may be qualified for Advanced Placement work. Of course they will also need to have the necessary background in the APP subject.

If AP courses are not offered by a nearby high school, it is still possible for students to earn APP credits by studying on their own. Interested students should write the Advanced Placement Program, CN 6670, Princeton, NJ 08541-6670 to request "The Advanced Placement Course Description" and "Grading the Advanced Placement Examination" for the subjects which interest them. Another possibility might be to enroll in one of the Advanced Placement courses offered through TIP's By-Mail Program. Further information on this program may be obtained by writing Diana Jensen, Coordinator for By-Mail Programs, Talent Identification Program, 01 West Duke Building, Duke University, Durham, NC 27708.

6. **Part-time Enrollment in a College or University**. In recent years a number of colleges and universities have opened their doors to high school, and in exceptional cases junior high school, students. These students, who have demonstrated their ability to do college-level work either by their SAT scores or by their achievements in their local schools, are admitted as "special students" and allowed to attend classes with regular undergraduates. The SAT scores, grades, and coursework required for college enrollment are usually determined by the college.

   Dual enrollment is an attractive option for many academically talented students. Colleges and universities usually offer introductory courses in subjects not available in high schools. College courses also enable students to continue work in a subject after they have completed the highest level course offered at their own schools. Dual enrollment can also provide an appropriate academic challenge for students not yet ready for full-time college study. The success of very young students in college-level work is attested by the growing number of institutions offering one-course scholarships to Talent Search participants.

   Secondary school personnel can assist students for whom part-time college work would be appropriate through flexibility in scheduling and course requirements. When possible, students should be granted both high school and college credit.

7. **Grade Acceleration**. Perhaps the most controversial method of dealing with academically talented students is "double promotion" or "grade skipping". A great deal of research has demonstrated that accelerated students tend to adjust, socially, emotionally, and academically, just as well as students who go through the normal grade progression. Although some people continue to believe that acceleration is harmful in some way, many students have fewer problems when they are allowed to work at an appropriate level than when they are bored by

"normal" classes. Also, in some cases, grade acceleration is the *only* way a student can enroll in challenging courses.

Nevertheless, grade acceleration is not recommended for all students. To move ahead one or more grades, students should be gifted verbally as well as mathematically. A good rule of thumb is to ask whether the student will be able to perform in the top quarter of his or her class in all subjects. Those who are much stronger in one area than another should be encouraged to develop their area of strength through one of the options discussed above. Students whose SAT and other standardized test scores indicate balanced intellectual development still need to consider whether they would miss out on activities which are important to them. However, students with a strong desire to accelerate and demonstrated intellectual potential deserve a fair hearing. No school should arbitrarily turn down a request to accelerate.

Acceleration often works best when a student will be moving to a new school in the new grade, that is, from middle or junior high school to high school. Acceleration at these times minimizes peer pressure on the student while it increases curricular choices.

EXTRACURRICULAR OPTIONS

1. **Academic Competitions**. School personnel can also encourage the intellectual development of their students through activities outside the regular school program. School-sponsored participation in academic competitions, for example, allows talented students to feel that their special abilities are valued as highly as those of student athletes. Contests exist in many subject areas, both at the regional and national level. Some of the best known are listed below.

   Mathcounts is a competition designed for 7th and 8th graders. This series of competitions, sponsored by the National Society of Professional Engineers, is designed to increase math interest and achievement levels. Students participate in both team and individual competitions. For more information write: Mathcounts Foundation, 1970 Chin Ridge Road, McLean, VA 22109-0269.

   Junior Classical League is a national competition for Latin students who are in grades 6-12. Students compete at the local, state, and national level. For more information write: Junior Classical League, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056.

   Young Writer's Contest Foundation is a national competition designed for 1st through 8th graders. This writing competition is designed to motivate students to write and improve their communication skills. In addition, this foundation seeks to offer educators an outlet for the writing creations that are produced in school writing programs. Areas covered include: poetry, short stories, and essays of less than 500 words. Entries generally are made during

October and November. For more information write: Young Writer's Contest Foundation, P.O. Box 6092, McLean, VA 22106.

Gifted and Talented Writing Competition is a program designed for 7th through 9th graders. Annual deadline is February 1st. For more information and application write: Gifted and Talented Writing Competition, Center for the Education and Study of the Gifted, Talented, and Creative, 1515 H. Bishop Lehr, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639.

Presidential Academic Fitness Awards Program is designed to emphasize academic excellence among primary and secondary school students. Criteria include: B+ average or its equivalent and being above the 80th percentile on nationally recognized achievement tests. For more information write: Presidential Academic Fitness Awards, U.S. Department of Education, P.O. Box 23749, Washington, D.C. 20036-3749.

Future Problem Solving Competition is designed for four-person teams emphasizing creative problem solving of future-oriented problems. Students in grades 4-12 may participate. For more information write: Future Problem Solving Program, St. Andrew's College, Laurinburg, NC 28352.

2. **Summer and Academic Year Programs Outside the School.** Schools can provide an important service by acting as clearinghouses for information on programs sponsored by other institutions. Each student and school participating in the Talent Search receives TIP's *Educational Opportunity Guide*, which lists more than 150 programs for gifted students; we know, however, that there are many excellent local programs which are not included in this directory. Frequently such programs are sponsored by libraries, museums, parents' groups, and local colleges. Many are summer programs, but other operate on Saturdays or after school. Establishing a center for information about these programs, either in your school library or in the guidance office, will encourage more students to participate.

3. **Mentorships.** Another means of developing students' special abilities is through mentorship programs which pair students with a community volunteer in a field which interests them. Students in mentorship programs have worked in hospitals and laboratories as well as many kinds of businesses. Mentorship programs provide an excellent opportunity for students to test their theoretical interests in the real world of work.

4. **Counseling Services.** Whatever their special talents, all gifted students need guidance in long-term educational and career planning. Certainly all Talent Search participants have the ability to succeed in college and should be encouraged to strive for that goal. Some junior high and middle school students may not be aware of the many types of financial aid available to students with demonstrated need and may believe col-

lege is beyond their means. Gifted girls may need special encouragement to continue taking math and to consider a wide range of career choices. Surprisingly, many gifted students need help in developing good study habits because their schooling thus far has not demanded that they have them. Gifted students with many talents may need special help in learning decision-making skills in order to focus their abilities.

Academically talented students are a valuable resource. For our nation's sake, as well as for the sake of the students themselves, we must all work to see that they are given opportunities to develop their abilities as fully as possible. The staff of the Talent Identification Program wishes you well in your part of this effort and stands ready to assist you in any way we can.

III.
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON EDUCATING ACADEMICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS

ORGANIZATIONS

American Association for Gifted Children
15 Gramercy Park
New York, NY 10003

The Association for the Gifted (TAG)
Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

Gifted Child Society, Inc.
190 Rock Road
Glen Rock, NJ 07452

Gifted Students Institute for Research and Development
P.O. Box 11388
Fort Worth, TX 76109

The National Association for Gifted Children
4175 Lovell Road
Box 30—Suite 140
Circle Pines, MN 55014

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted, Inc.
School of Professional Psychology
Wright State University
Dayton, OH 45435

JOURNALS

G/C/T. G/C/T Publishing Co., Box 66654, Mobile, AL 36606.

Gifted Child Quarterly. Editorial Office, Purdue University, SCC-G, West Lafayette, IN 47907.

Gifted Children Monthly. Gifted and Talented Publications, Inc., 530 University Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301.

Journal for the Education of the Gifted. Wayne State University Press, 5959 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI 48202.

N/S-LTI-G/T Bulletin. (National/State Leadership Training Institute for Gifted and Talented). 316 W. Second Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

Roeper Review. Roeper City and Country School, 2190 N. Woodward, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013.

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